Authentic Leadership in Sports Teams

A Thesis Presented for the Masters of Industrial/Organizational Psychology Degree

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Abstract

Authentic leadership includes a positive moral perspective characterized by high ethical standards that guide decision making and behavior. The measurement of authentic leadership is aimed at a leader's ability to be genuine. This study identified and analyzed authentic leaders on sports teams. Group cohesion was also assessed. The purpose was to determine whether authentic leadership would lead to performance when mediated by team cohesion and trust. Survey analyses were used to assess several teams. Results indicated that sports teams may benefit from training in authentic leadership. Authentic leadership predicts higher levels of trust, team cohesion, and group performance.

Table of Contents

Authentic Leadership in Sports Teams

Authenticity can be described as an expression of one's own convictions accompanied with the acceptance of responsibility for one's own decisions (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996). From a leadership context, authenticity has been applied in the empirical literature dealing with general leadership, ethics, and positive organizational behavior (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). This literature has corresponded with an increasing recognition in both the lay and academic literatures of a need for effective leadership. Organizations are in the midst of facing ongoing, systemic threats and changes. These include a shift from manufacturing to a service economy, shifting preferences in markets, demographic changes, terrorism, mergers and acquisitions, globalization, rapidly advancing technology, generational changes in employee and employer expectations, and political, military, and corporate ethical challenges (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2006). Leaders and their practices are key determinants of organizations ability to cope with these challenges. In several recent, high-profile cases, corporate CEOs have driven high-visibility organizations to bankruptcy through unethical acts (Bennis, 2007). A consideration of authenticity in leadership provides a theoretical perspective for evaluating the influence of convictions and ethical behavior on performance.

Authentic leadership theory is in its early stages of conceptual development, yet the construct of authenticity has deep roots in philosophy and psychology (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Even though authentic leadership is relatively new in leadership literature, authenticity has a longer history in closely related fields of psychology. More recently, there has been empirical evidence of authentic leadership related to job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2008). A theory-

based construct has been created, and there is a countless number of research questions pertaining to authentic leadership.

Authentic Leadership Defined

Several definitions have been proposed for authenticity in a leadership context. Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May (2004) defined authentic leaders as "Those who are deeply aware of how they think and feel and how they are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character (as cited in Jex & Britt, 2008, p.325). Alternatively, authenticity had been defined as, "Owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to 'know oneself' and further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p. 382). Building on these earlier attempts, Walumbwa et al. (2008) defined authentic leadership as, "A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (p. 94).

By definition then, authentic leadership includes a positive moral perspective characterized by high ethical standards that guide decision making and behavior (Walumbwa, et. al, 2008). As Luthans and Avolio (2009) state,

The goal of the authentic leadership initiative is to understand what truly shapes positive

development in leaders and also followers, teams, organizations, communities and entire

societies…We deliberately used the term 'authentic' because we were interested in discovering the very basic, genuine elements of positive leadership development (p. 303). Derived from the work of Shakespeare (1589) many scholars considering authenticity in leadership have adopted the principle "to thine own self be true", as a central tenet to authentic leadership theory (Clapp-Smith, 2009). Furthermore, (Endrissat, Muller, & Kaudela-Baum, 2007, p. 208) state, "To be authentic means to be 'oneself,' i.e. to behave according to one's 'true' self" (Endrissat, Muller, &Kaudela-Baum, 2007, p. 208). The proposed advantage of being authentic is the promotion of trust in leadership. Followers appreciate openness and honesty from authentic leaders. These definitions provide a framework in which to study the potential for the importance of transparency and an internalized moral perspective.

Approaches to Leadership

The attempt to understand leaders and leadership has led to the development of many different approaches and definitions. Galton (1869) defined a leader as someone with the ability to radically change history. Vroom and Jago (2007) define leadership as, "A process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things" (p. 18). Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) define leadership as "A process that includes influencing the task objectives and strategies of an organization, influencing people in the organization to implement the strategies and achieve the objectives, influencing the group maintenance and identification, and influencing the culture of the organization"(p. 149).

In leadership theory there are trait-based approaches, behavioral approaches, and modern theories. Trait-based approaches attempt to describe leaders in terms of attributes and characteristics. Behavioral approaches focus on displayed behaviors of a leader. Finally, modern theories are those such as 'Fiedler's Contingency Theory', 'Path Goal Theory', 'Leader-

Member Exchange', 'Charismatic', 'Transformational', and 'Transactional Leadership' (Jex & Britt, 2008, pp. 306-326). All of these theories of leadership have had an influence on Authentic Leadership.

Authentic Leadership is one of the most recent theories of leadership. It has become prevalent in literature in response to issues surrounding corruption, greed, and dishonesty (Bennis, 2007). However, more established leadership models and theories have presented Authentic Leadership with an extensive background from which to draw knowledge. Building on a moral foundation, authentic leaders consciously engage followers to implement ethical and honorable decisions as their own (Hannah, 2007).

Trait-Based Approaches

The trait approach to leadership focuses on the foundation that leaders possess characteristics or traits that non-leaders lack. The trait approach has received much more attention in the empirical literature when focusing on leader emergence (Jex & Britt, 2008, p. 307). Traits have been linked to leader emergence. Such traits are intelligence, a need for dominance, self-monitoring people, and socially perceptive people (Jex & Britt, 2008, p. 307). Self-monitoring people and socially perceptive people are two aspects of authentic leadership. Also, authentic leadership traits focus on efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency (Luthans & Avolio, 2009).

Two additional constructs of interest are core self-awareness and self-regulation of followers (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2006). Self-awareness is not a destination point, but rather a process where the leader continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs, and desires (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2006). Avolio and Walumbwa (2006) identify four components of self-awareness: moral values, attributions,

psychological contract, and efficacy beliefs. It is worth noting traits that blend with the model of

authentic leadership. In a study by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992), they identified traits that

predicted managerial effectiveness and advancement within organizations. These included a

high energy level, integrity, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, and self-confidence. These

traits also are very similar to those associated with authentic leadership.

Zaccaro (1997) states, "A substantial and growing empirical research base argues for

traits that are significant precursors *of leadership* effectiveness" (p. 13). Two of the traits

associated with authentic leadership are psychological closeness and positive psychological

capital. Psychological closeness is understood as closeness in both the affective relationship and

working relationship between leaders and followers, which can help leaders understand the

factors influencing subordinate behaviors and performance (Harvey, Martinko, & Gardner,

2006). Positive psychological capital is defined as the combination of self-efficacy, hope,

optimism, and resilience. Positive psychological capital can have an important impact on a

leader's self-awareness. People with high levels of positive psychological capital are likely to

view themselves favorably (Harvey et al., 2006). This is especially important because self-

confidence has been identified as a trait that predicts leadership.

Self-regulation represents another important antecedent for authenticity (Gardner, Avolio,

Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Self-regulation implies that the behavior is consistent with

the true self, the inner thoughts and feelings. This concept can be related to Endrissat's findings

that leaders not only need to have an individual position, but also need to act accordingly

(Endrissat, 2007).   A leader obtaining transparency and supportiveness with his subordinates is

essential for authentic leadership (Harvey et. al, 2006). Understanding leadership traits is

important in understanding how to become an authentic leader. Additionally, the behavioral

approaches to leadership have had a large influence on authentic leadership.

Behavioral Approaches

Behavioral approaches to leadership focus on specific behaviors that distinguish effective

from ineffective leaders (Jex & Britt, 2008, p. 308). Behavioral integrity "Is the perceived

pattern of alignment between an actor's words and deeds. Behavioral integrity is the extent to

which employees believe a manager 'walks her talk', and conversely, it reflects the extent to

which they see her as 'talking her walk'" (Endrissat et al., 2007, p. 208). Authentic leaders also

promote associate-building. They are able to see the best in subordinates and can identify and

nurture their skills and abilities (Harvey et al., 2006). Additionally, authentic relations between

leaders and followers can lead to trust, which is very important in organizations (Clapp-Smith et

al., 2009). Avolio and Reichard (2008) state, "By building trust through demonstrating

vulnerability and self-disclosure in stable situations, the leaders and followers will be able to

confidently rely on one another in situations of time pressure and crisis" (p. 337).

Endrissat et al. (2007) state, "As a leader, one should not play a role that doesn't fit.

Every person needs to find his or her own way of doing things-his or her own style that is

genuine and true and that doesn't follow a standardized or popular fashion" (p. 214). Across

situations there will be varying optimal behaviors. An authentic leader must be intrinsically

motivated to display consideration for others. Additionally, "Authentic leaders who routinely

make unbiased attributions might come to accurately understand how behaviors performed in the

present will affect future outcomes" (Harvey et al., 2006). This has important implications for

organizations in regards to decision making.

Studying authentic leadership in conjunction with behavioral approaches could lead to great advances in organizations. Mazitis and Slawinski (2008) propose that, "Authentic leadership, may impact the type of dialogue that takes place in organizations" (p. 438). This could have a great impact on leaders and followers. Furthermore, this could "allow the authentic leader to encourage open and honest dialogue among organizational members" (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2008, p.438). The implications for this occurring are clear: openness and honesty lead to more success in organizations. Integrity is an important aspect of authentic leadership as well. Endrissat (2007) states, it is likely that a leader must act with integrity on a regular basis in order to be considered an authentic leader (Endrissat et al., 2007).

It is important to analyze behaviors because ultimately they will determine an organization's productivity and a worker's job satisfaction. Harter (2002) argues that people who report true-self behavior usually experience higher self-esteem, more positive affect, and more hope for the future. Behavioral aspects of leadership are an integral component of authentic leadership. Nevertheless, the role of situations and leader-follower interactions are the focus of more modern approaches to understanding leadership.

An important aspect that behavioral approaches do not focus on is the role of the situation. Zaccaro (2007) states:

> Leadership skills and expertise are likely to be more closely bound and constrained by situational requirements. Individuals with particular kinds of skills and expertise can, indeed, be leaders in one situation but not in others that require very different knowledge and technical skills sets…The behavioral acts that leaders need to display to perform effectively will vary widely across different situations (p. 9).

Modern leadership theories attempt to account for variations in situations and analyze leaders as well as followers.

Recent Theories

Recent theories of leadership consist of: 'Fiedler's Contingency Theory', 'Path Goal Theory', 'Leader-Member Exchange', 'Charismatic', and 'Transformational' leadership. All of these theories have had an influence on authentic leadership. Fiedler was one of the very first to attribute success of a leader as being dependent on the situation and a leader's followers (Fiedler, 1967). Authentic leadership has been influenced by Fiedler's Contingency Theory. Path-Goal Theory reformulated is another modern theory of leadership (House, 1996). It combines leadership and employee motivation into one theory. House (1996) outlines four different leadership styles: directive leadership, supportive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and participative leadership. This theory is briefly recognized in the context of this paper because the original path-goal theory (House, 1971) was also one of the first theories to recognize the crucial significance between leaders and subordinates.

The Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) model is yet another leadership model that focuses on leaders and followers over time (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Time is a factor with whether one will be perceived as an authentic leader or not. More specifically, Avolio and Reichard (2008) state, "The most recent shift toward followers is represented in the theory of authentic leadership development, which explicitly acknowledges leadership development as an interactive process among leaders, followers, and the context in which they find themselves

embedded over time" (p. 327). There is a shift in leadership theory from studying the leaders to understanding the interactions between leaders and followers over time. This will then yield results and implications for how leaders and followers should ideally treat one another. This has significant effects for organizations that want to increase performance. Walumbwa et al. (2008) explain how authentic leadership at the individual level has an impact on follower Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs), follower-commitment, follower satisfaction with the leader, and follower performance. Gardner et al. (2005) recommend that when considering authentic leadership, the role of the follower is equally important to understanding the leadership process as is the leader. Tate (2008) states that, "By actively involving and developing followers, authentic leaders should increase follower job commitment, performance, and trust in leadership" (p.18).

Transformational leadership theories have greatly influenced the study of authentic leadership. A charismatic (transformational) leader is one who is able to shape an organization and make large, positive impacts (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996). Transformational leadership theories have had a very strong influence on authentic leadership theories. Macik-Frey et al. (2009) state, "Authentic leadership holds dimensions of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence" (p. 455). The literature in the last few years has shifted even more to a concept of "shared leadership" (Avolio & Reichard, 2008). Authentic leadership is nearly a continuation of transformational leadership theories with, "A key distinction is that authentic leaders are anchored by their own deep sense of self-awareness; they know where they stand on important issues, values, and beliefs and they are transparent with those they interact with and lead" (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 104). All of these recent theories have incorporated leader-follower interactions into their models. There is a

growing emphasis in studying followers as much as studying leaders. Models of authentic

leadership employ leader-follower interactions and integrate moral components to leadership.

Empirical Studies

The empirical studies testing authentic leadership have been limited. One of the first

articles to empirically test authentic leadership in the organizational psychology literature came

in the form of a qualitative study (Endrissat et al. 2007). The researchers asked questions in an

exploratory fashion to participants and sought to understand: (1) what constitutes 'good'

leadership? (2) What is the leader's responsibility? (3) How is the relationship between leader

and follower perceived? (4) What serves as leadership legitimization? The aim of the study was

to identify communalities of responses based on a heterogeneous sample of managers from

various industries.

Twenty-six interviews were performed. Responses were grouped into "clusters" based on

specific meaning and content. The results suggest five characteristics of a leader that include:

one's own position, binding commitment, relationship to business, social proximity, ad

authenticity to be one's self (Endrissat et al. 2007). Several narrations listed the ability to clearly

and independently state one's position in terms of having a mind of one's own or having a clear

point of view as a requirement of a leader. The 'binding commitment' cluster suggests that in

order to be perceived as a leader, one must be straight-forward and consistent when practicing

self-commitment (walking the talk). The leader cannot renounce his position in the face of

controversy or negative relational dynamics (Endrissat et al. 2007). The aggregated interviews

also suggest that a leader must have a good relationship (commitment) with the organization.

Managers described their task as a personal challenge that needed to be mastered and take joy in

improving the organization. 'Social proximity' is described as having a personal attachment to

the relationships among members of a team or community (Endrissat et al., 2007).

At the core of the model developed in this study is authenticity. Being authentic is reflected in one's talks and actions (Endrissat et al., 2007). Being authentic is also cited by Endrissat et al. (2007) by one interviewer as,

It is important is that at the end of the day you can 'look yourself in the eye.' If I can look at my mirror image, I have no problem. And you always have the alternative to quit your job and do something else….If it gets worse and worse, you reach a point where you can't support it anymore, and then you are not authentic anymore, you are no longer a credible leader. And this is when you have to quit, when you have to go and something else. You have to be consistent and you shouldn't pretend to be somebody you are actually not (p. 213).

The implications of this study present arguments that separate authentic leadership from other leadership constructs. There is uniqueness to the concept of authenticity in that leaders can benefit from being genuine. An argument is also made specifically stating, "We strongly suggest not to equate authentic leadership with ethical, transformational, or any other existing leadership form, because equating it would make it a redundant construct" (Endrissat et al., 2007). Walumbwa et al. (2008) specifically demonstrate discriminant validity that separates authentic from transformational and ethical leaderships through empirical findings.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) documented an extensive validation effort to create items for the authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ). Initial content specifications were created based on (a) an extensive review of the literature on authentic leadership theory and development (b) recently completed dissertations on authentic leadership (c) discussions with a leadership research group comprised of faculty and graduate students focusing on what constitutes authentic leadership and its development.

Five initial domains of items were created for authentic leadership: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced information processing, internalized regulation, and positive moral perspective. Next, another group of doctoral students responded to the question of what they believe an authentic leader consists of. Answers were then content analyzed. The five domains were reduced to four, combining internalized regulation and positive moral perspective into what is currently labeled as internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). An examination distinguishing authentic leadership was performed by reviewing the literatures of transformational and ethical leadership. This resulted in sixteen items consisting of self-awareness (4 items), relational transparency (5-items), internalized moral perspective (4-items), and balanced processing (3-items).

Next, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed using two independent samples from the United States and the People's Republic of China. Analyses were performed with the AMOS maximum likelihood procedure. The results of both samples indicated that a second-order factor model is the best-fitting model.

Another study by Walumbwa et al. (2008), aimed to create construct validity and analyze psychometric properties of authentic leadership. The construct validation included demonstrating: dimensionality and internal consistency, further convergent validity by showing positive correlations with alternative measures of similar constructs (ethical leadership and transformational leadership), and discriminant and predictive validity. The hypotheses of the stated that (1) authentic leadership is positively related to ethical leadership and transformational leadership and (2) authentic leadership is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and follower satisfaction with supervisor when controlling for (a) ethical leadership and (b) transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The results of the study indicated that authentic leadership is significantly correlated with ethical leadership and transformational leadership, supporting hypothesis 1. Simultaneously, authentic leadership was significantly distinguishable from these two leadership constructs. The results also supported the second hypothesis that authentic leadership predicted organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), organizational commitment, and follower satisfaction with supervisor when controlling for transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al, 2008).

In study three from Walumbwa et al. (2008), authentic leadership was tested along with job satisfaction and job performance. They suggest that the theory of authentic leadership should demonstrate positive correlations with job satisfaction and job performance. The study included testing using the authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ), follower job satisfaction (Brayfield Roth scale), and follower individual job performance. The measure of job performance consisted of three constructs: personal initiative, self-direction, and innovation. Organizational climate was also calculated and used as a control variable.

Structural equation modeling was used to examine the aforementioned variables. Statistically significant and positive coefficients were found relating authentic leadership to individual follower job satisfaction and job performance when controlling for organizational climate. The results suggest that authentic leadership should be considered to enhance individual followers' trust in the leader and can result in higher levels of job satisfaction and job performance. This is a crucial finding for the movement of authentic leadership development, as findings related to job performance are necessary for the progression of the topic.

Clapp-Smith, Vogesgesang, & Avey (2009) performed a study testing authentic leadership related to sales performance. They measured sales performance at time 1 and time 2 four months later. They had four hypotheses: (1) Follower's perceptions of authentic leadership would lead to

financial performance (2) Group-level psychological capital will be positively related to performance as measured by sales growth (3) Group-level trust in management will partially mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and performance as measured by sales growth (4) Group-level trust in management will partially mediate the relationship between psychological capital and performance as measured by sales growth. Surveys were collected assessing store-level associates, assistant managers, and administrators working in the general office. These surveys included measures of authentic leadership (ALQ), positive psychological capital (PsyCap), and trust in management.

Path analysis in structural equation modeling software (Mplus) was used to test hypotheses. Results indicate that authentic leadership was significantly related to change in unit sales from time 1 to time 2. Also, both mediating hypotheses (3 and 4 above) were supported. However, hypotheses 2, group-level psychological capital related to sales performance was not supported. This contradicted previous empirical findings (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009).

In a longitudinal study by Tate (2008), it was hypothesized that individuals high in self-monitoring would be more likely than those low in self-monitoring to be perceived as leaders early in a group's tenure. Also, it was also hypothesized that individuals high in self-monitoring would be less likely to be perceived as leaders later in a group's tenure. Similarly, it was hypothesized that individuals high in authentic leadership would be less likely than those low in authentic leadership to be perceived as leaders early in a group's tenure. It was anticipated that individuals high in authentic leadership would be more likely than those low in authentic leadership to be perceive as leaders later in a group's tenure. Finally, it was predicted that self-monitoring would be negatively related to authentic leadership (Tate, 2008).

Sixty-nine participants comprised of twenty-nine teams were included in the study. A

measure of authentic leadership was created for the study based on George's (2003) five

dimensions of authentic leadership (Tate, 2008). An exploratory factor analysis was performed

to create items. A measure of self-monitoring was also tested. The results suggested

nonsignificant relationships between self-monitoring and rated perceptions of leadership.

Similarly, there was a negative relationship between authentic leadership and self-monitoring.

The results suggest that the extent to which individuals match traits that others associate with

leadership may vary over time (Tate, 2008). Also, there are implications that a formal scale is

needed to measure authentic leadership, as authenticity is becoming more prevalent in literature

despite the minimal amount of empirical testing.

In a study by Eriksen (2009), MBA students participated in an assignment consisting of

practicing self-authorship, practical reflexivity, and self-awareness which is cited as being a

requirement of an authentic and effective leader. Learning objectives were created for the

assignment including: increasing self-awareness through determining core values, identifying

criteria for the effectiveness of leadership, developing the skill of practical reflexivity,

developing the skill of self-authorship, and experiencing the uniqueness of others (Eriksen,

2009).

Students were asked to record their values and determine core beliefs. Forty-three

participants responded to a survey via surveymonkey.com. At the conclusion of the assignment a

number of descriptive statistics were formed including: 95.3% reported the assignment was

meaningful to the development of their self-understanding, 97.6 % reported that the assignment

assisted them in clarifying their values, 90.2% reported that they felt it was essential to living out

their day-to-day lives, but only 72.5% reported the activity was meaningful to their leadership

development (Eriksen, 2009). These results demonstrate that authentic leadership can be applied

in a variety of settings. Also, it is a reminder that for the study and progression of authentic

leadership, validated studies are a determinant in its survival.

       In a review on authentic leadership by Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, and Walumbwa (2010),

a chapter summarizes the development of authentic leadership and offers suggestions for future

research. Self-awareness is described as one of the core components of authentic leadership.

This requires leaders to understand themselves and how their perceptions drive their assessments

of people and situations (Avolio et al., 2010). Trigger events and self-reflection are mentioned as

related areas of study in conjunction with authentic leadership. Core positive psychological

resources are also mentioned. Authentic leaders take a positive approach about who they are and

what they can accomplish through others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

       The review mentions the authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ) and its extensive

development. No other empirical studies are mentioned in this review of which directly tested

authentic leadership, however. Suggestions for trainers and practitioners are mentioned in

summarizing the possible avenues of practical applications for authentic leadership. The review

concludes with avenues research question with a challenge asking:

> (1) Does the effect of authentic leadership generalize across different levels of
>
> analysis, and it so in what ways? (2) Is authentic leadership valid for explaining the
>
> behaviors and motivation of individuals across cultures and to what extent? (3) Does
>
> the effect of authentic leadership on, say, performance vary as a consequence of
>
> organizational context or individual difference? (4) Are perceptions of authentic
>
> leadership equivalent across cultures, or does culture change how we operationalize
>
> authentic leadership? (p. 49).

The empirical research on authentic leadership is currently very small. Culturally, however, there seems to be a need for authentic, genuine leaders. Aspects of authenticity provide leaders an avenue to build trust. Authentic leadership remains an interesting concept and has potential for practical applications, but the research literature lacks empirical evidence that is necessary for its growth.

Authenticity in Sports

It is argued here that authenticity will be valid and applicable in a sports setting. On a sports team, leaders are chosen on the basis of team members' perception. While there may be an elected captain chosen by the coach or team members, an emergent leader or leaders can rise up without the designated title. This leader has proven his leadership and has gained respect from followers. In a sports setting, if conflict occurs, it is solely interpersonal conflict in a cohesive group. However, in an organizational setting there is interpersonal conflict as well as many internal and external factors influencing decision making (groupthink, fear of losing income, pressures toward uniformity).   Thus, authenticity will be most applicable in a sports setting since there are less confounding variables than an organizational setting.

 High levels of authenticity will be correlated with high levels of performance with group cohesion acting as a mediator or moderator. In sports, "team cohesion ranks as a very important factor for enhancing team performance and feelings of satisfaction among members" (Cox, 1998, p. 296). Also, leadership factors are a key determinant in creating cohesion in a team (Cox, 1998, p. 300). Authenticity will be a predictor for sports performance.

Proposed Hypotheses

**Figure 1 below demonstrates the following hypotheses.**

H1: Authentic leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by trust in leadership.

H2: Authentic leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by group cohesion.

H3: Trust in leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by group cohesion.

H4: Authentic Leadership leads to higher group cohesion when mediated by trust in leadership.

Figure 1
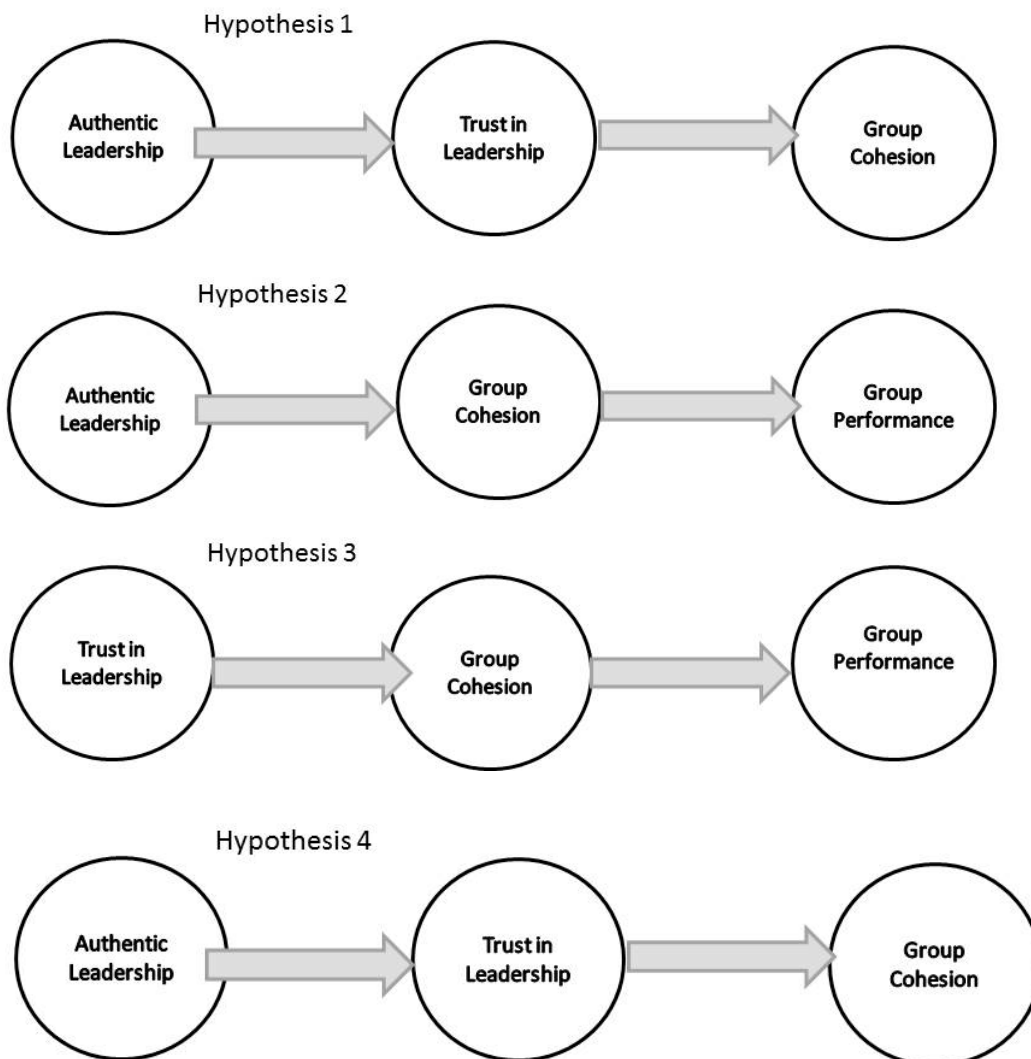
Method

Participants

Participants were student-athletes from two universities located in the southern United

States. Data were collected from 129 individuals, however, only 109 completed the entire survey

(84.5%) and were included in the analyses. Student-athletes were participated in various sports

ranging from Swimming/Diving (n=39, 30.2%), Rowing (n=35, 27.1%), Soccer (n=18, 14.0%),

Track/Field (n=10, 7.8%), Tennis (n=4, 3.1%), Football (n=4, 3.1%), Golf (n=3, 2.3%)

Wrestling (n=1, .78%), Cross Country (n=1, .78%), Softball (n=1, .78%) and Basketball (n=1,

.78%). The majority of those surveyed were female (n=99, 76.7%), however, four participants

did not report gender (n=4, 3.1%). The majority of participants were white (n=110, 85.2%)

followed by black (n=8, 6.2%), Other (n=4, 3.1%) and Hispanic (n=3, 2.3%). Four participants

did not report race (n=4, 3.1%).

Procedure

The survey was administered through SurveyMonkey.com. Participants were offered the chance

of a small monetary incentive and recognition through a career development program. Student-

athletes were first asked to respond to a series of demographic question including: Work status,

sport, year in school, gender, and race. Next, they were asked "Who do you consider is a leader

on your sports team." Finally, they were asked to complete the survey in assessing their team's

leadership, cohesion, and group performance.

Measures

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) is

a 16-item, theory-driven leadership instrument used to assess the four components of authentic

leadership including: Self-awareness, transparency, ethical/moral, and balanced processing.

Sample items include, "Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others" (self-awareness),

"Admits mistakes when they are made" (transparency), "Makes decisions based on his or her core values" (moral/ethical), and "Analyzes relevant data before coming to a decision"(balanced processing) (http://www.mindgarden.com/products/alq.htm). Items were assessed on a 5-point likert scale. When testing for reliability of this measure Cronbach's alpha was (α = .96).

***Authentic Sports Inventory*.** Authentic leadership in sports was measured utilizing a 16-item survey adapted from the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) with items tailored to sports situations. Samples items include "Speak how I feel to my teammates and coach" (transparency), "Understand and act on my core values" (moral), "Seek out and appreciate others' opinions"(balanced processing), and "Understand when I need to make a change" (self-awareness). Items were assessed on a 5-point likert scale. When testing for reliability of this measure Cronbach's alpha was (α = .88).

Group Environment Questionnaire. The 18-item Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) assesses a group's cohesion and the attraction of its members. The four components include: Attraction to Group-Social, Attraction to Group-Task, Group Integration-Social, and Group Integration-Task (www.morris.umn.edu/.../Group%20Environment%20Questionnaire.doc). Items were assessed on a 9-point likert scale. When testing for reliability of this measure Cronbach's alpha was (α = .93).

Charismatic Leadership. 12-items from the 24-item assessment measuring charismatic leadership were used. This was done to assess potential similarities between authentic leadership and other more established leadership assessments (Robbins, 2008, p.57). Items were assessed on a 5-point likert scale. When testing for reliability of this measure Cronbach's alpha was (α = .82).

Group Performance. Group performance was tested on a single item, 7-point scale. The item stated, "My team, as a whole, is performing at a good level." Group performance was measured after Authentic Leadership and before Group Cohesion.

Trust in Leadership. Trust in leadership was measured on a single item, 7-point scale. The item stated, "How much do you trust the leadership on your team." Trust in leadership was measured after Authentic Leadership and Group Performance and before Group Cohesion.

Procedure

Surveys were administered to student-athletes through Surveymonkey.com. Sports administrators were contacted to obtain contact information of the student-athletes. Student-athletes at one university were offered the chance of a $25.00 reward, while the other were offered non-monetary "points" through a leadership development program designed for student-athletes. All surveys were preceded by an informed consent approval request that all were required to read before participating in the study.

Results

Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics and correlations between the authentic sports inventory, authentic leadership, team performance, trust in leadership, group cohesion, and charismatic leadership are listed below in Table 1. Thirteen significant relationships were found with the strongest being that between authentic leadership and trust ($r=.70$).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Variables

Measure	M	SD	Cronbach's Alpha	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Authentic Sports Inventory	49.28	7.90	0.88	--					
2. Authentic Leadership	46.30	13.48	0.96	.39 **	--				
3. Team Performance	5.06	1.44		.06	.43 **	--			
4. Trust in Leadership	4.87	1.91		.34 **	.70 **	.57 **	--		
5. Group Cohesion	130.46	23.03	0.93	.25 **	.59 **	.48 **	.57 **	--	
6. Charismatic Leadership	38.12	5.07	0.82	.60 **	.49 **	.18	.41 **	.39 **	--

$**p < .01.$

In regards to the perceived leaders on sports team (n=44, 35.2%) reported the "captain", (n=43, 34.4%) reported the "coach", (n=26, 20.8%) reported "myself," and (n=12, 9.6%) reported "other" as being the leader of the team.

Regression Analysis

This mediation was tested based on Baron and Kenny's three step method for testing mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, the mediator should be regressed onto the independent variable. Second, the dependent variable should be regressed onto the independent variable. Lastly, the dependent variable should be regressed onto both the independent variable and the mediator. If all of these relationships are significant and the independent variable has less of an effect in the third equation than the mediator on the dependent variable, then there is mediation. Full mediation occurs when the independent variable has no effect in the third equation.

R1: Authentic leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by trust in leadership. This hypothesis was supported. There were significant correlations between authentic leadership and trust in leadership (R^2= .49), authentic leadership and group performance (R^2= .19), and with both authentic leadership and trust with group performance (R^2= .33). There was full mediation. Authentic leadership did not have a significant effect on group performance when controlling for trust in leadership, thus there is a mediating effect.

R2: Authentic leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by group cohesion. This hypothesis was also supported. There were significant correlations between authentic leadership and group cohesion (R^2= .34), authentic leadership and team performance (R^2= .19), and with both authentic leadership and group cohesion with group performance (R^2= .26). Authentic leadership had less of an effect when controlling for group cohesion, thus there is a mediating effect. Authentic leadership had less of an effect when controlling for group cohesion, thus there is a mediating effect (f=2.21) compared with (f=4.92) when regressing group performance onto both authentic leadership and group cohesion.

R3: Trust in leadership leads to higher group performance when mediated by group cohesion This hypothesis was supported. There were significant correlations between trust in leadership and group cohesion (R^2= .33), group cohesion and group performance (R^2= .33), and both trust in leadership and group cohesion with group performance (R^2= .36). Trust in leadership had less of an effect when controlling for group cohesion, thus there is a mediating effect (f=4.68) compared with (f=7.20) when regressing group performance onto trust in leadership.

R4: Authentic leadership leads to higher group cohesion when mediated by trust in leadership. This hypothesis was supported. There were significant correlations between authentic leadership and trust in leadership (R^2= .49), authentic leadership and group cohesion (R^2= .34), and both

authentic leadership and trust in leadership with group cohesion ($R^2 = .39$). Authentic leadership had a significant effect when controlling for trust in leadership, thus there is a partially mediating effect.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between student-athlete self-rated authentic leadership and group performance. Many of the variables examined were significantly correlated. While authentic leadership has developed in Organizational Psychology literature, this study demonstrates there may be a need for authentic leadership development in a sports setting.

Regression analyses demonstrated that authentic leadership has very strong correlations with trust in leaders, which has strong correlations with reported group performance. This result fits with existing literature. Authenticity leads to trusting relations between leaders and followers (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, authentic leadership has now been shown to be correlated with group cohesion which can lead to higher levels of group performance. This also has a basis in Sports Psychology literature. Some researchers believe that leadership and team cohesion are very important aspects in creating high group performance (Cox, 1998).

This study also adds to authentic leadership development by correlating it with other forms of leadership (charismatic). Understanding differences among leadership styles is the first step in becoming an effective leader. Coaches should be aware that leadership has many relationships with team performance. Most notably, the factor of trust in leadership seems to have a big impact on team performance. As leadership relies more on leader-follower ratings,

analyzing the specific variables becomes more important. Leaders gain respect by demonstrating good character and good morals.

Leadership, team cohesion, and trust are three characteristics of a team that has the potential to make it great. While every team has talented individuals, coaches constantly search for a "winning edge." Trust in leadership and group cohesion have been identified as predictors for increased levels of group performance. Authentic leadership predicts trust and group cohesion. Therefore, coaches should take note that authenticity may provide a winning edge for teams in the future.

Modern leadership theories focus on the role of the situation, leader-follower interactions, and traits that have an impact on performance. Authentic leadership has only been studied in a small amount of situations and never before in conjunction with sports. In an atmosphere where team chemistry, trust, and leadership are often spoken as the cause of success there appears to be a benefit for leaders to act authentically.   Leader-follower interactions may be strongly tied to morals and values. The key distinction that separates authentic leadership from other forms is that leaders are deeply self-aware of their morals and values.   They are passionate and unwavering in their beliefs. Also, they are transparent with those they lead (Walumbwa et al., 2008).   This type of leader has great potential to create a vision for a successful team of followers.

This study is the first to the researcher's knowledge that tests authentic leadership in a sports setting. With a growing concern in sports where noncompliance and NCAA violations seem to be more prevalent, a leadership theory that incorporates a moral component could become a more effective form of leadership. Similar to the high-visibility corporate scandals that sparked the creation of authentic leadership, recent media announcements of NCAA

noncompliance have led some to distrust the amateur athlete. Incorporating authenticity, trust, and integrity into a coaching and leadership style promotes higher team cohesion and performance.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations that must be considered when analyzing results. A large portion of the participants were female and mainly Caucasian in a limited age range (college athletes). Group performance was self-reported and not based on a more tangible statistic (i.e. points scored, playing time, etc.). All results were based on surveys and most of which were on a likert scale. Sport teams varied largely in size and limited the possibility of accurate comparisons between teams. A final limiting factor was analyzing only aggregate results across all participants and not within each sport team.

Future Research

Future research should analyze not only perceptions of student-athletes but archival data and personality factors. Future research should include testing more demographics as well as a comparison between amateur and professional athletes to assess potential differences. A longitudinal study would be helpful as well to isolate variables. Additionally, more research studies in a sports setting will identify a potential need for Authentic Leadership. More studies with a varying demographic would be beneficial. Increasing the number of participants and comparing across sports teams would be an interesting research topic.

Charismatic leadership was tested simply to have a more established form of leadership as a control. Future research should test many types of leadership and isolate several variables

(i.e. transformational leadership). Also, trust in leadership appears to be an important factor in performance. Future research might attempt at further understanding this relationship. Research may also analyze the potential relationships between subjective (trust, leadership, team chemistry) and objective (height, weight, body type) human characteristics. Lastly, future studies should attempt to apply psychological principles to other disciplines of study when testing various situations.

Practical Implications

There are many practical implications to this study. Sports have an effect on individuals, groups, and entire societies. Participation in sports appears to be growing at an accelerating rate. Athletes are now specializing in sports and starting their athletic careers at younger ages. Leadership and coaching can play a pivotal role in a young person's life, including (but certainly not limited to) the college student-athlete. Many forms of leadership lack moral components. With high-visibility scandals occurring, it is important to teach individuals important values such as honesty, openness, self-awareness, and authenticity. At a group level, sports have the potential to allow individuals the importance of teamwork. This has many implications for life lessons and socializing. Working in a team and having success with a common goal can grant individuals confidence used later in life.

At a societal level there are many implications with Authentic Leadership. College sports at some levels pay coaches multi-million dollar contracts. Sports are following business models and the potential for corruption appears to have increased. Incorporating a moral component might become more essential criteria for judging leadership as the money associated with college sports becomes ever-more prevalent. Coaches, leaders, and teams may benefit from training in authentic leadership.

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Appendices

A.

As a leader on this sports team at practices and games I…

1. Speak how I feel to my teammates and coach…………………... 0 1 2 3 4
2. Take ownership for my mistakes……………………………….. 0 1 2 3 4
3. Allow people to speak how they feel when performing………….0 1 2 3 4
4. Am honest, even if it might hurt someone's feelings…………….0 1 2 3 4
5. Believe my emotions and feelings are aligned with one another 0 1 2 3 4
6. Behave in a way consistent with morals/beliefs…………………0 1 2 3 4
7. Understand and act on my core values …………………………..0 1 2 3 4
8. Ask others to express their core values…………………………..0 1 2 3 4
9. Base my decisions off of ethical values………………………….0 1 2 3 4
10. Seek out and appreciate other people's opinions………………..0 1 2 3 4
11. Analyze important material before making a decision…………..0 1 2 3 4
12. Listen to all perspectives before coming to a final decision……..0 1 2 3 4
13. Look for criticism to improve interactions with others…………..0 1 2 3 4
14. Am aware that others recognize my skills………………………..0 1 2 3 4
15. Understand when I need to make a change………………………0 1 2 3 4
16. Show to others that my actions affect them ……………………..0 1 2 3 4

"Authentic Sports Inventory" Frame of Reference survey adapted from the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio, Gardner, & Walumbwa, 2007)

B.

Sample Items:

My Leader:

1. says exactly what he or she means. 0 1 2 3 4

2. admits mistakes when they are made. 0 1 2 3 4

3. encourages everyone to speak their mind. 0 1 2 3 4

4. tells you the hard truth. 0 1 2 3 4

5. displays emotions exactly in line with feelings. 0 1 2 3 4

C.

Group Environment Questionnaire

Directions: The Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) helps you assess your perceptions of an athletic team of which you are a member. If you are not currently participating on a team, answer the questions with respect to a team from your past. There are no right or wrong answers, so please give your immediate reaction. Some of the questions may seem repetitive, but please answer them all-and be as honest as possible.

The following questions help assess your feelings about your personal involvement with your team. On a scale of 1 through 9, 1 indicating the strongest agreement, and 9 indicating the strongest disagreement, answer each question.

1. I do not enjoy being part of the social activities of this team. _____

2. I'm unhappy about the amount of playing time I get. _____

3. I am not going to miss the members of this team when the season ends. _____

4. I'm unhappy with my team's level of desire to win. _____

5. Some of my best friends are on this team. _____

6. This team does not give me enough opportunities to improve my personal performance. _____

7. I enjoy other parties more than team parties.

8. I like the style of play on this team. _____

9. This team is one of my most important social groups. _____

10. Our team in united in trying to reach its performance goals. _____

11. Members of our team would rather go out on their own than get together as a team. _____

12. We all take responsibility for any loss or poor performance by our team. _____

13. Our team members rarely party together. _____

14. Our team members have conflicting aspirations for the team's performance. _____

15. Our team would like to spend time together in the off-season. _____

16. If members of our team have problems in practice, everyone wants to help them so we can get back together again. _____

17. Members of our team do not stick together outside of practices and games. _____

18. Our team members do not communicate freely about each athlete's responsibilities during competition or practice. _____

Scoring:

The GEQ measure these four elements regarding how attractive a group is to its individual members:

1. Attraction to group – task
2. Attraction to group – social
3. Group integration – task
4. Group integration – social

To determine your score simply add you numbers in the brackets below. However, for questions 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,11,13,14,and 17 you should revere the score (1=9 and 9=1)

Attraction to group – task – 2,4,6,8 (range 4-36)

Attraction to group – social – 1,3,5,7,9 (range 5-45)

Group integration – task – 10,12,14,16,18 (range 5-45)

Group integration – social 11,13,15,17 (range 4-36)

The higher your score on each subscale, the greater you reflect that dimension with the team.

Vita

Greg Houchin was born in Nashville, TN. He attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville from 2005-2009 where he studied Psychology. As an undergraduate student, Greg was a member of the varsity swim team and four-time letterman. Next, he studied a master's in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. This thesis is a dedication to both his passion for Industrial/Organizational Psychology and lessons learned while participating on a cohesive sports team.